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THE AMBASSADORS.

BY HENRY JAMES.

PART I.

I.

STRETHER'S first question, when he reached the hotel, was about his friend; yet on his learning that Waymarsh was apparently not to arrive till evening he was not wholly disconcerted. A telegram from him bespeaking a room "only if not noisy," with the answer paid, was produced for the inquirer at the office, so that the understanding that they should meet at Chester rather than at Liverpool remained to that extent sound. The same secret principle, however, that had prompted Strether not absolutely to desire Waymarsh's presence at the dock, that had led him thus to postpone for a few hours his enjoyment of it, now operated to make him feel that he could still wait without disappointment. They would dine together at the worst, and, with all respect to dear old Waymarsh—if not even, for that matter, to himself—there was little fear that in the sequel they should not see enough of each other. The principle I have just mentioned as operating had been, with the most newly-disembarked of the two men, wholly instinctive—the fruit of a sharp sense that, delightful as it would be to find himself looking, after so much separation, into his comrade's face, his business would be a trifle bungled should he simply arrange that this countenance should present itself to the nearing steamer as the first "note," for him, of Europe. Mixed with everything was the apprehension, already, on Strether's part, that it would, at best, throughout, prove the note of Europe in quite a sufficient degree.

This note had been meanwhile—since the previous afternoon, thanks to this happier device—such a consciousness of personal freedom as he had not known for years; such a deep taste of change and of having, above all, for the moment, nobody and nothing to consider, as promised already, if headlong hope were not too foolish, to color his adventure with cool success. There were people on the ship with whom he had easily—so far as ease could, up to now, be imputed to him—consorted, and who for the most part plunged straight into the current that set, from the landing-stage,

to London; there were others who had invited him to a tryst at the inn and had even invoked his aid for a "look round" at the beauties of Liverpool; but he had stolen away from every one alike; had kept no appointment and renewed no acquaintance; had been indifferently aware of the number of persons who esteemed themselves fortunate in being, unlike himself, "met"; and had even, independently, unsociably, alone, without encounter or relapse and by mere quiet evasion, given his afternoon and evening to the immediate and the sensible. They formed a qualified draught of Europe, an afternoon and an evening on the banks of the Mersey, but such as it was he took his potion at least undiluted. He winced a little, truly, at the thought that Waymarsh might be already at Chester; he reflected that, should he have to describe himself at Chester as having "got in" so early, it would be difficult to make the interval look particularly eager; but he was like a man who, finding in his pocket, with joy, more money than usual, handles it a while and idly, pleasantly chinks it before addressing himself to the business of spending. That he was prepared to be vague to Waymarsh about the hour of the ship's touching, and that he both wanted extremely to see him and enjoyed extremely the duration of delay—these things, it is to be conceived, were early signs in him that his relation to his actual errand might prove none of the simplest. He was burdened, poor Strether—it had better be confessed at the outset—with the oddity of a double consciousness. There was detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference.

After the young woman in the glass cage had held up to him, across her counter, the pale pink leaflet bearing his friend's name, which she pronounced, he turned away to find himself, in the hall, facing a lady who met his eyes as with an intention suddenly determined, and whose features—not freshly young, not markedly fine, but expressive and agreeable—came back to him as from a recent vision. For a moment they stood confronted; then the moment placed her: he had noticed her, the day before, at his previous inn, where—again in the hall—she had been briefly engaged with some people of his own ship's company. Nothing had actually passed between them, and he would as little have been able to say what had been the sign of her face for him on the first occasion as to name the ground of his present recognition. Recognition, at any rate, appeared to prevail on her own side as well—which would only have added to the mystery. All she now began by saying to him, none the less, was that, having chanced to catch his inquiry, she was moved to ask, by his leave, if it were possibly a question of Mr. Waymarsh of Milrose, Connecticut, Mr. Waymarsh the American lawyer.

"Oh yes," he replied, "my very well-known friend. He's to meet me here, coming up from Malvern, and I supposed he would already have arrived. But he doesn't come till later, and I'm relieved not to have kept him. Do you know him?" Strether wound up.

It was not till after he had spoken that he became aware of how much there had been in him of response; when the tone of her own rejoinder, as well as the play of something more in her face—something more, that is, than its apparently usual restless light—seemed to notify him. "I've met him at Milrose—where I used sometimes, a good while ago, to stay; I had friends there who were friends of his, and I've been at his house. I won't answer for it that he would know me," Strether's interlocutress pursued; "but I should be delighted to see him. Perhaps," she added, "I shall—for I'm staying over." She paused an instant, while our friend took in these things, and it was as if a good deal of talk had already passed. They even vaguely smiled at it, and Strether presently observed that Mr. Waymarsh would, no doubt, be easily to be seen. This, however, appeared to affect the lady as if she might have advanced too far. She was frank about everything. "Oh," she said, "he won't care!"—and she immediately thereupon remarked that she believed Strether knew the Munsters; the Munsters being the people he had seen her with at Liverpool.

But he didn't, as it happened, know the Munsters well enough to give the case much of a lift; so that they were left together as if over the mere laid table of conversation. Her qualification of the mentioned connection had rather removed than placed a dish, and there seemed nothing else to serve. Their attitude remained, none the less, that of not forsaking the board; and the effect of this, in turn, was to give them the appearance of having accepted each other with an absence of preliminaries practically complete. They moved along the hall together, and Strether's companion remarked that the hotel had the advantage of a garden. He was aware by this time of his strange inconsequence: he had shirked the intimacies of the steamer and had muffled the shock of Waymarsh only to find himself forsaken, in this sudden case, both of avoidance and of caution. He passed with his new friend, before he had so much as gone up to his room, into the garden of the hotel, and at the end of ten minutes had agreed to meet her there again as soon as he should have made himself tidy. He wanted to look at the town, and they would forthwith look together. It was almost as if she had been in possession and received him as a guest. Her acquaintance with the place presented her in a manner as a hostess, and Strether had a rueful glance for the lady in the glass cage. It was as if this personage had seen herself instantly superseded.

When, in a quarter of an hour, he came down, what his hostess saw, what she might have taken in with a vision kindly adjusted, was the lean, slightly loose figure of a man of the middle height and something more, perhaps, than the middle age—a man of five-and-fifty, whose most immediate signs were a marked bloodless brownness of face, a thick, dark mustache, of characteristically American cut, growing strong and falling low, a head of hair still abundant,

but abundantly streaked with gray, and a nose of bold, free prominence, the even line, the high finish, as it might have been called, of which, had a certain effect of mitigation. A perpetual pair of glasses astride of this fine ridge, and a line, unusually deep and drawn, the prolonged pen-stroke of time, accompanying the curve of the mustache from nostril to chin, did something to complete the facial furniture which an attentive observer would have seen to be catalogued, on the spot, in the vision of the other party to Strether's appointment. She waited for him in the garden, the other party, drawing on a pair of singularly fresh, soft and elastic light gloves and presenting herself with a superficial readiness which, as he approached her over the small smooth lawn and in the watery English sunshine, he might, with his rougher preparation, have marked as the model for such an occasion. She had, this lady, a perfect plain propriety, an expensive subdued suitability, that her companion was not free to analyze, but that struck him, so that his consciousness of it was instantly acute, as a quality quite new to him. He stopped on the grass, before reaching her, and went through the form of feeling for something, possibly forgotten, in the light overcoat he carried on his arm; yet the essence of the act was no more than the impulse to gain time. Nothing could have been more odd than Strether's feeling, at that moment, that he was launched in something of which the sense would be quite disconnected from the sense of his past, and which was literally beginning there and then. It had begun, in fact, already, upstairs, before the dressing-glass that struck him as blocking further, so strangely, the dimness of the window of his dull bedroom; begun with a sharper survey of the elements of Appearance than he had for a long time been moved to make. He had felt during those moments that these elements were not so much to his hand as he should have liked, and then had fallen back on the thought that they were precisely a matter as to which help was supposed to come from what he was about to do. He was about to go up to London, and hat and necktie might wait. What had come as straight to him as a ball in a well-played game—and caught, moreover, not less neatly—was just the air, in the person of his friend, of having seen and chosen, the air of achieved possession of those vague qualities and quantities that figured to him, collectively, as the advantage snatched from lucky chances. Without pomp or circumstance, certainly, as her original address to him, equally with his own response, had been, he would have sketched to himself his impression of her as: "Well, she's more subtly civilized—!" If "More subtly than *whom*?" would not have been for him a sequel to this remark, that was just by reason of his deep consciousness of the bearing of his comparison.

The amusement, at all events, of a civilization more subtle was what—familiar compatriot as she was, with the full tone of the compatriot and the rattling link, not with mystery, but only with

dear dyspeptic Waymarsh—she appeared distinctly to promise. His pause while he felt in his overcoat was positively the pause of confidence, and it enabled his eyes to make out as much of a case for her, in proportion, as her own made out for himself. She affected him as almost insolently young; but an easily-carried five-and-thirty could still do that. She was, however, like himself, marked and wan; only it naturally couldn't have been known to him how much a spectator looking from one to the other might have discerned that they had in common. It would not for such a spectator have been altogether insupposable that, each so finely brown and so sharply spare, each confessing so to dents of surface and aids to sight, to a disproportionate nose and a head delicately or grossly grizzled, they might have been brother and sister. On this ground, indeed, there would still have been a residuum of difference; such a sister having known, surely, in respect to such a brother the extremity of separation, and such a brother feeling now, in respect to such a sister, the extremity of surprise. Surprise, it was true, was not, on the other hand, what the eyes of Strether's friend most showed him while she gave him, stroking her gloves smoother, the time he appreciated. They had taken hold of him straightway, measuring him up and down, as if they knew how; as if he were human material they had already in some sort handled. Their possessor was in truth, it may be communicated, the mistress of a hundred cases or categories, receptacles of the mind, subdivisions for convenience, in which, from a full experience, she pigeon-holed her fellow-mortals with a hand as free as that of a compositor scattering type. She was as equipped in this particular as Strether was the reverse, and it made an opposition between them which he might well have shrunk from submitting to if he had fully suspected it. So far as he did suspect it he was, on the contrary, after a momentary shake of his consciousness, as pleasantly passive as might be. He really had a sort of sense of what she knew. He had quite the sense that she knew things he didn't, and though this was a concession that, in general, he found not easy to make to women, he made it now as good-humoredly as if it lifted a burden. His eyes were so quiet behind his eternal nippers that they might almost have been absent without changing his face, which took its expression mainly, and not least its stamp of sensibility, from other sources, surface and grain and form. He joined his guide in an instant, and he then felt that she had profited still better than he by his having been, for the moments just mentioned, so at the disposal of her intelligence. She knew even intimate things about him that he had not yet told her and perhaps never would. He was not unaware that he had told her rather remarkably many for the time, but these were not the real ones. Some of the real ones, however, precisely, were what she knew.

They were to pass again through the hall of the inn to get into

the street, and it was here, presently, that she checked him with a question. "Have you looked up my name?"

He could only stop with a laugh. "Have you looked up mine?"

"Oh dear, yes—as soon as you left me. I went to the office and asked. Hadn't *you* better do the same?"

He wondered. "Find out who you are, after the uplifted young woman there has seen us thus scrape acquaintance?"

She laughed on her side now at the shade of alarm in his amusement. "Isn't it a reason the more? If what you're afraid of is the injury for me—my being seen to walk off with a gentleman who has to ask who I am—I assure you I don't in the least mind. Here, however," she continued, "is my card, and as I find there is something else again I have to say at the office, you can just study it during the moment I leave you."

She left him after he had taken from her the small pasteboard she had extracted from her pocket-book, and he had extracted another from his own, to exchange with it, before she came back. He read thus the simple designation "Maria Gostrey," to which was attached, in a corner of the card, with a number, the name of a street, presumably in Paris, without other appreciable identity than its foreignness. He put the card into his waistcoat pocket, keeping his own meanwhile in evidence; and as he leaned against the door-post he met with the smile of a straying thought what the expanse before the hotel offered to his view. It was positively droll to him that he should already have Maria Gostrey, whoever she was—and he hadn't really the least idea of it—in a place of safe keeping. He had somehow an assurance that he should carefully preserve the little token he had just tucked in. He gazed with unseeing, lingering eyes as he followed some of the implications of his act, asking himself if he really felt admonished to qualify it as disloyal. It was prompt, it was possibly even premature, and there was little doubt of the expression of face the sight of it would have produced in a certain person. But if it were "wrong"—why then he had better not have come out at all. At this, poor man, had he already—and even before meeting Waymarsh—arrived. He had believed he had a limit, but the limit had been transcended within thirty-six hours. By how long a space on the plane of manners or even of morals, moreover, he felt still more sharply after Maria Gostrey had come back to him and with a gay, decisive "So now—!" led him forth into the world. This counted, it struck him as he walked beside her with his overcoat on an arm, his umbrella under another and his personal pasteboard a little stiffly retained between forefinger and thumb—this struck him as really, in comparison, his introduction to things. It hadn't been "Europe" at Liverpool, no—not even in the dreadful, delightful, impressive streets the night before—to the extent his present companion made it so. She had not yet done that so much so as when, after their walk had lasted a few minutes and he had had time to wonder if

a couple of sidelong glances from her meant that he had best have put on gloves, she almost pulled him up with an amused challenge. "But why—fondly as it's so easy to imagine your clinging to it—don't you put it away? Or if it's an inconvenience to you to carry it, one is often glad to have one's card back. The fortune one spends in them!"

Then he saw both that his way of marching with his own prepared tribute had affected her as a deviation in one of those directions he couldn't yet measure, and that she supposed this emblem to be still the one he had received from her. He handed her, accordingly, the card, as if in restitution, but as soon as she had it she felt the difference and, with her eyes on it, stopped short for apology. "I like," she observed, "your name."

"Oh," he answered, "you won't have heard of it!" Yet he had his reasons for not being sure but that she perhaps might.

Ah, it was but too visible! She read it over again as one who had never seen it. "Mr. Lewis Lambert Strether"—she sounded it almost as freely as if a stranger were in question. She repeated, however, that she liked it—"particularly the Lewis Lambert. It's the name of a novel of Balzac's."

"Oh, I know that!" said Strether.

"But the novel's an awfully bad one."

"I know that too," Strether smiled. To which he added with an irrelevance that was only superficial: "I come from Woollett, Massachusetts." It made her for some reason—the irrelevance or whatever—laugh. Balzac had described many cities, but he had not described Woollett, Massachusetts. "You say that," she returned, "as if you wanted one immediately to know the worst."

"Oh, I think it's a thing," he said, "that you must already have made out. I feel it so that I certainly must look it, speak it, and, as people say there, 'act' it. It sticks out of me, and you knew, surely, for yourself, as soon as you looked at me."

"The worst, you mean?"

"Well, the fact of where I come from. There, at any rate, it *is*; so that you won't be able, if anything happens, to say that I've not been straight with you."

"I see"—and Miss Gostrey looked really interested in the point he had made. "But what do you think of as happening?"

Though he was not shy—which was rather anomalous—Strether gazed about without meeting her eyes; a motion that, in talk, was frequent with him, yet of which his words often seemed not at all the effect. "Why, that you should find me too hopeless." With which they walked on again together, while she answered, as they went, that the most "hopeless" of her countryfolk were precisely those, in general, she liked best. All sorts of other pleasant small things—small things that were yet large for him—flowered in the air of the occasion; but the bearing of the occasion itself on matters still remote concerns us too closely to permit us to multiply

our illustrations. Two or three, however, in truth, we should perhaps regret to lose. The tortuous wall—girdle, long since snapped, of the little swollen city, half held in place by careful civic hands—wanders, in narrow file, between parapets smoothed by peaceful generations, pausing here and there for a dismantled gate or a bridged gap, with rises and drops, steps up and steps down, queer twists, queer contacts, peeps into homely streets and under the brows of gables, views of cathedral tower and waterside fields, of huddled English town and ordered English country. Too deep almost for words was the delight of these things for Strether; yet as deeply mixed with it were certain images of his inward picture. He had trod this walk in the far-off time, at twenty-five; but that, instead of spoiling it, only enriched it for present feeling and marked his renewal as a thing substantial enough to share. It was with Waymarsh he should have shared it, and he was now, accordingly, taking from him something that was his due. He looked repeatedly at his watch, and when he had done so for the fifth time Miss Gostrey took him up.

"You're doing something that you think not right."

It so touched the place that he quite changed color, and his laugh was almost awkward. "Am I enjoying it as much as *that*?"

"You're not enjoying it, I think, so much as you ought."

"I see"—he appeared thoughtfully to agree. "Great is my privilege."

"Oh, it's not your privilege! It has nothing to do with *me*. It has to do with yourself. Your failure's general."

"Ah, there you are!" he laughed. "It's the failure of Woollett. *That's* general."

"The failure to enjoy," Miss Gostrey explained, "is what I mean."

"Precisely. Woollett isn't sure it ought to enjoy. If it were it would. But it hasn't, poor thing," Strether continued, "any one to show it how. It's not like me. I have somebody."

They had stopped, in the afternoon sunshine—constantly pausing, in their stroll, for the sharper sense of what they saw—and Strether rested on one of the high sides of the old stony groove of the little rampart. He leaned back on this support with his face to the tower of the cathedral, now admirably commanded by their standpoint, the high red-brown mass, square and subordinately spired and crocketed, retouched and restored, but charming to his long-sealed eyes and with the first swallows of the year weaving their flight all round it. Miss Gostrey lingered near him, full of an air, to which she more and more justified her right, of understanding the effect of things. She quite concurred. "You've indeed somebody." And she added: "I wish you *would* let me show you how!"

"Oh, I'm afraid of you!" he declared.

She kept on him a moment, through her glasses and through his own, a certain pleasant pointedness. "Ah no, you're not! You're

not in the least, thank goodness! If you had been we shouldn't so soon have found ourselves here together. I think," she comfortably said, "you trust me."

"I think I do!—but that's exactly what I'm afraid of. I shouldn't mind if I didn't. It's falling thus, in twenty minutes, so utterly into your hands. I dare say," Strether continued, "it's a sort of thing you're thoroughly familiar with; but nothing more extraordinary has ever happened to me."

She watched him with all her kindness. "That means simply that you've recognized me—which is rather beautiful and rare. You see what I am." As on this, however, he protested, with a good-humored headshake, a resignation of any such claim, she had a moment of explanation. "If you'll only come on further as you *have* come, you'll at any rate make out. My own fate has been too many for me, and I've succumbed to it. I'm a general guide—to 'Europe,' don't you know? I wait for people—I put them through. I pick them up—I set them down. I'm a sort of superior 'courier-maid.' I'm a companion at large. I take people, as I've told you, about. I never sought it—it has come to me. It has been my fate, and one's fate one accepts. It's a dreadful thing to have to say, in so wicked a world, but I verily believe that, such as you see me, there's nothing I don't know. I know all the shops and the prices—but I know worse things still. I bear on my back the huge load of our national consciousness, or, in other words—for it comes to that—of our nation itself. Of what is our nation composed but of the men and women individually on my shoulders? I don't do it, you know, for any particular advantage. I don't do it, for instance—some people do, you know—for money."

Strether could only listen and wonder and weigh his chance. "And yet, affected as you are then to so many of your clients, you can scarcely be said to do it for love." He waited a moment. "How do we reward you?"

She had her own hesitation, but "You don't!" she finally exclaimed, setting him again in motion. They went on, but in a few minutes, though while still thinking over what she had said, he once more took out his watch; but mechanically, unconsciously, and as if made nervous by the mere exhilaration of what struck him as her strange and cynical wit. He looked at the hour without seeing it, and then, on something again said by his companion, had another pause. "You're really in terror of him."

He smiled a smile that he almost felt to be sickly. "Now you can see why I'm afraid of you."

"Because I've such illuminations? Why, they're all for your help! It's what I told you," she added, "just now. You feel as if this were wrong."

He fell back once more, settling himself, as if to hear more about it, against the parapet. "Then get me out!"

Her face fairly brightened for the joy of the appeal, but, as if

it were a question of immediate action, she visibly considered. "Out of waiting for him?—of seeing him at all?"

"Oh no—not that," said poor Strether, looking grave. "I've got to wait for him—and I want very much to see him. But out of the terror. You did put your finger on it a few minutes ago. It's general, but it avails itself of particular occasions. That's what it's doing for me now. I'm always considering something else; something else, I mean, than the thing of the moment. The obsession of the other thing is the terror. I'm considering at present, for instance, something else than *you*."

She listened with charming earnestness. "Oh, you oughtn't to do that!"

"It's what I admit. Make it, then, impossible."

She continued to think. "Is it really an 'order' from you?—that I shall take the job? *Will* you give yourself up?"

Poor Strether heaved his sigh. "If I only could! But that's the deuce of it—that I never can. No—I can't."

She was not, however, discouraged. "But you desire to, at least!"

"Oh, unspeakably!"

"Ah then, if you'll try!"—and she took over the job, as she had called it, on the spot. "Trust me!" she exclaimed; and the action of this, as they retraced their steps, was presently to make him pass his hand into her arm in the manner of a kind, dependent, paternal old person who wishes to be "nice" to a younger one. If he drew it out again, indeed, as they approached the inn, this may have been because, after more talk had passed between them, the relation of age, or at least of experience—which, for that matter, had already played to and fro with some freedom—affected him as incurring a readjustment. It was at all events perhaps lucky that they arrived in sufficiently separate fashion within range of the hotel-door. The young lady they had left in the glass cage watched as if she had come to await them on the threshold. At her side stood a person equally interested, by his attitude, in their return, and the effect of the sight of whom was instantly to determine for Strether another of those responsive arrests that we have had so repeatedly to note. He left it to Miss Gostrey to name, with the fine, full bravado, as it almost struck him, of her "Mr. Waymarsh!" what was to have been, what—he more than ever felt as his short stare of suspended welcome took things in—would have been, but for herself, his doom. It was already upon him, even at that distance, that Mr. Waymarsh was, for *his* part, joyless.

II.

HE had none the less to confess to this friend that evening that he knew almost nothing about her, and it was a deficiency that Waymarsh, even with his memory refreshed by contact, by her own prompt and lucid allusions and inquiries, by their having par-

taken of dinner, in the public room, in her company, and by another stroll, to which she was not a stranger, out into the town to look at the cathedral by moonlight—it was a blank that the resident of Milrose, though admitting acquaintance with the Munsters, professed himself unable to fill. He had no recollection of Miss Gostrey, and two or three questions that she put to him about those members of his circle had, to Strether's observation, the same effect he himself had already more directly felt—the effect of appearing to place all knowledge, for the time, on this original woman's side. It interested him indeed to mark the limits of any such relation for her with his friend as there could possibly be a question of, and it particularly struck him that they were to be marked altogether in Waymarsh's quarter. This added to his own sense of having gone far with her—gave him an early illustration of a much shorter course. There was a certitude he immediately grasped—a conviction that Waymarsh would quite fail, as it were, and on whatever degree of acquaintance, to profit by her.

There had been, after the first interchange among the three, a talk of some five minutes, in the hall, and then the two men had adjourned to the garden, Miss Gostrey, for the time, disappearing. Strether, in due course, accompanied his friend to the room he had bespoken, and had, before going out, scrupulously visited; where, at the end of another half hour, he had no less discreetly left him. On leaving him he repaired straight to his own room, but with the effect, very soon, of feeling the compass of that chamber resented by his condition. There he had, on the spot, the first consequence of their reunion. A place was too small for him after it that had seemed large enough before. He had awaited it with something that he would have been sorry, have been almost ashamed, not to recognize as emotion, yet with a tacit assumption, at the same time, that emotion would in the event find itself relieved. The actual oddity was that he was only more excited; and his excitement—to which, indeed, he would have found it difficult instantly to give a name—brought him once more downstairs and caused him for some minutes vaguely to wander. He went once more to the garden; he looked into the public room, found Miss Gostrey writing letters and backed out; he roamed, fidgeted and wasted time; but he was to have his more intimate session with his friend before the evening closed.

It was late—it was not till Strether had spent an hour upstairs with him—that this subject consented to betake himself to doubtful rest. Dinner and the subsequent stroll by moonlight—a dream, on Strether's part, of romantic effects rather prosaically merged in a mere missing of thicker coats—had measurably intervened, and this midnight conference was the result of Waymarsh's having—when they were free, as he put it, of their fashionable friend—found the smoking-room not quite what he wanted, and yet bed what he wanted still less. His most frequent form of words was

that he knew himself, and they were applied on this occasion to his certainty of not sleeping. He knew himself well enough to know that he should have a night of prowling unless he should succeed, as a preliminary, in getting as tired as he wanted. If the effort directed to this end involved, till a late hour, the presence of Strether—consisted, that is, in the detention of the latter for full discourse—there was yet an impression of minor discipline involved, for our friend, in the picture Waymarsh made as he sat, in trousers and shirt, on the edge of his couch. With his long legs extended and his large back much bent, he nursed alternately, for an almost incredible time, his elbows and his beard. He struck his visitor as extremely, as almost wilfully, uncomfortable; yet what had this been for Strether, from that first glimpse of him disconcerted in the porch of the hotel, but the predominant note? It was a discomfort that was in a manner contagious, as well as also, in a manner, inconsequent and unfounded; the visitor felt that unless he should get used to it—or unless Waymarsh himself should—it would constitute a menace for his own prepared, his own already confirmed, consciousness of the agreeable. On their first going up together to the room that Strether had selected for him Waymarsh had looked it over, in silence, with a sigh that represented for his companion, if not the habit of disapprobation, at least the despair of felicity; and this look had recurred to Strether as the key of much that he had since observed. "Europe," he had begun to gather from these things, had, as yet, then, for him, rather failed of its message; he had not got into tune with it, and had almost, at the end of three months, renounced any such expectation.

He really appeared at present to insist on that by just perching there with the gas in his eyes. This of itself somehow conveyed the futility of single rectifications in a multiform failure. He had a large, handsome head, and a large, sallow, seamed face—a striking, significant physiognomic total, the upper range of which, the great political brow, the thick, loose hair, the dark, fuliginous eyes, recalled even to a generation whose standard had dreadfully deviated the impressive image, familiar by engravings and busts, of some great national worthy of the earlier part of the mid-century. He was of the personal type—and it was an element in the power and promise that in their early time Strether had found in him—of the American statesman, the statesman of "Congressional halls," of an elder day. The legend had been, in later years, that, as the lower part of his face, which was weak, and slightly crooked, spoiled the likeness, this was the real reason for the growth of his beard, which might have seemed to spoil it for those not in the secret. He shook his mane; he fixed, with his admirable eyes, his auditor or his observer; he wore no glasses and had a way, partly formidable, yet also partly encouraging, as from a representative to a constituent, of looking very hard at those who approached

him. He met you as if you had knocked and he had bidden you enter. Strether, who had not seen him for a long interval, apprehended him now with a freshness of taste, and had perhaps never done him such ideal justice as on this occasion. The head was bigger, the eyes finer, than they need have been for the career; but that only meant, after all, that the career was itself expressive. What it expressed at midnight in the gas-glaring bedroom at Chester was that the subject of it had, at the end of years, barely escaped, by flight in time, a general nervous collapse. But this very proof of the full life, as the full life was understood at Milrose, would have made, to Strether's imagination, an element in which Waymarsh could have floated easily had he only consented to float. Alas, nothing so little resembled floating as the rigor with which, on the edge of his bed, he hugged his posture of prolonged impermanence. It suggested to his comrade something that always, when kept up, worried him—a person established in a railway-coach with a forward inclination. It represented the angle at which poor Waymarsh was to sit through the ordeal of Europe.

Thanks to the stress of occupation, the strain of professions, the absorption and embarrassment of each, they had not, for some five years before this sudden brief and almost bewildering reign of comparative ease, found, at home, so much as a day for a meeting; a fact that was in some degree an explanation of the sharpness with which, for Strether, most of his friend's features stood out. Those he had lost sight of since the early time came back to him; others that it was never possible to forget struck him now as sitting, clustered and expectant, like a somewhat defiant family-group, on the doorstep of their residence. The room was narrow for its length, and Strether's friend on the bed thrust so far a pair of slippered feet that he had almost to step over them in his recurrent rebounds from his chair to fidget back and forth. There were marks they made on things to talk about, and on things not to, and one of the latter, in particular, fell like the tap of chalk on the blackboard. Married at thirty, Waymarsh had not lived with his wife for fifteen years, and it came up vividly between them in the glare of the gas that Strether was not to ask about her. He knew they were still separate and that she lived at hotels, travelled in Europe, painted her face, and wrote her husband abusive letters, of not one of which, to a certainty, that sufferer spared himself the perusal; but he respected without difficulty the cold twilight that had settled on this side of his companion's life. It was a province in which mystery reigned, and as to which Waymarsh had never spoken the informing word. Strether, who wanted to do him the highest justice wherever he *could* do it, singularly admired him for the dignity of this reserve, and even counted it as one of the grounds—grounds all handled and numbered—for ranking him, in the range of their acquaintance, as a success. He *was* a success, Waymarsh, in spite of overwork, of prostration, of sensible shrink-

age, of his wife's letters and of his not liking Europe. Strether would have reckoned his own career less futile had he been able to put into it anything so handsome as so much fine silence. One might, oneself, easily have left Mrs. Waymarsh; and one would assuredly have paid one's tribute to the ideal in covering with that attitude the derision of having been left by her. Her husband had held his tongue, and had made a large income; and these were the achievements, in especial, as to which Strether envied him. Our friend had had indeed, for his part too, a subject for silence, which he fully appreciated; but it was a matter of a different sort, and the figure of the income he had arrived at had never been high enough to look any one in the face.

"I don't know as I quite see what you require it for. You don't appear sick to speak of." It was of Europe that Waymarsh thus finally spoke.

"Well," said Strether, falling as much as possible into step, "I guess I don't *feel* sick now that I've started. But I had pretty well run down before I did start."

Waymarsh raised his melancholy look. "Ain't you about up to your usual average?"

It was not quite pointedly sceptical, but it seemed somehow a plea for the purest veracity, and affected our friend, proportionately, as the very voice of Milrose. He had long since made a mental distinction—though never, in truth, daring to betray it—between the voice of Milrose and the voice, even, of Woollett. It was the former, he felt, that was most in the real tradition. There had been occasions in his past when the sound of it had reduced him to temporary confusion, and the present, for some reason, suddenly became such another. It was no light matter, none the less, that the very effect of his confusion should be to make him again prevaricate. "That description hardly does justice to a man to whom it has done such a lot of good to see *you*."

Waymarsh fixed on his washing-stand the silent, detached stare with which Milrose in person, as it were, might have marked the unexpectedness of a compliment from Woollett; and Strether, on his side, felt once more like Woollett in person. "I mean," his friend presently continued, "that your appearance isn't as bad as I've seen it: it compares favorably with what it was when I last noticed it." On this appearance Waymarsh's eyes yet failed to rest; it was almost as if they obeyed an instinct of propriety, and the effect was still stronger when, always considering the basin and jug, he added: "You've filled out some since then."

"I'm afraid I have," Strether laughed: "one does fill some with all one takes in, and I've taken in, I dare say, more than I've natural room for. I was dog-tired when I sailed." It had the oddest sound of cheerfulness.

"I was dog-tired," his companion returned, "when I arrived, and it's this wild hunt for rest that takes all the life out of me.

The fact is, Strether—and it's a comfort to have you here at last to say it to; though I don't know, after all, that I've really waited; I've told it to people I've met in the cars—the fact is, such a country as this ain't my *kind* of country, any way. There ain't a country I've seen over here that *does* seem my kind. Oh, I don't say but what there are plenty of pretty places and remarkable old things; but the trouble is that I don't seem to feel anywhere in tune. That's one of the reasons, I suppose, I've gained so little. I haven't had the first sign of that lift I was led to expect." With this he broke out more earnestly. "Look here—I want to go back."

His eyes were all attached to Strether's now, for he was one of the men who fully face you when they talk of themselves. This enabled his friend to look at him hard and immediately to appear in his own eyes, by doing so, to the highest advantage. "That's a genial thing to say to a fellow who has come out on purpose to meet you!"

Nothing could have been finer than, on this, Waymarsh's sombre glow. "*Have* you come out on purpose?"

"Well—very largely."

"I thought, from the way you wrote, there was something back of it."

Strether hesitated. "Back of my desire to be with you?"

"Back of your prostration."

Strether, with a smile made more dim by a certain consciousness, shook his head. "There are all the causes of it!"

"And no particular cause that seemed most to drive you?"

Our friend could at last conscientiously answer. "Yes. One. There *is* a matter that has had much to do with my coming out."

Waymarsh waited a little. "Too private to mention?"

"No, not too private—for *you*. Only rather complicated."

"Well," said Waymarsh, who had waited again. "I *may* lose my mind over here, but I don't know as I've done so yet."

"Oh, you shall have the whole thing. But not to-night."

Waymarsh seemed to sit stiffer and to hold his elbows tighter. "Why not—if I can't sleep?"

"Because, my dear man, I *can*!"

"Then where's your prostration?"

"Just in that—that I can put in eight hours;" and Strether brought it out that if Waymarsh didn't "gain" it was because he didn't go to bed: the result of which was, in its order, that, to do the latter justice, he permitted his friend to insist upon his really getting settled. Strether, with a kind coercive hand for it, assisted him to this consummation, and again found his own part in their relation auspiciously enlarged by the smaller touches of lowering the lamp and seeing to a sufficiency of blanket. It somehow ministered for him to indulgence to feel Waymarsh, who looked unnaturally big and black in bed, as much tucked in as a patient in a hospital and, with his covering up to his chin, as much simplified

by it. He hovered in vague pity, in fine, while his companion challenged him out of the bedclothes. "Is she really after you? Is that what's behind?"

Strether felt an uneasiness at the direction taken by his companion's vision, but he played a little at uncertainty. "Behind my coming out?"

"Behind your prostration, or whatever. It's generally felt, you know, that she follows you up pretty close."

Strether's candor was never very far off. "Oh, it has occurred to you that I'm literally running away from Mrs. Newsome?"

"Well, I haven't *known* but what you are. You're a very attractive man, Strether. You've seen for yourself," said Waymarsh, "what that lady downstairs makes of it. Unless indeed," he rambled on with an effect between the ironic and the anxious, "it's you that are after *her*. Is Mrs. Newsome *over* here?" He spoke as with a droll dread of her.

It made his friend—though rather dimly—smile. "Dear no; she's safe, thank goodness—as I think I more and more feel—at home. She thought of coming, but she gave it up. I've come in a manner instead of her; and come, to that extent—for you're right in your inference—on her business. So you see there *is* plenty of connection."

Waymarsh continued to see at least all there was. "Involving accordingly the particular one I've referred to?"

Strether took another turn about the room, giving a twitch to his companion's blanket and finally gaining the door. His feeling was that of a nurse who had earned personal rest by having made everything straight. "Involving more things than I can think of breaking ground on now. But don't be afraid—you shall have them from me: you'll probably find yourself having quite as much of them as you can do with. I shall—if we keep together—very much depend on your impression of some of them."

Waymarsh's acknowledgment of this tribute was characteristically indirect. "You mean to say you don't believe we *will* keep together?"

"I only glance at the danger," Strether paternally said, "because when I hear you wail to go back I seem to see you open up such possibilities of folly."

Waymarsh took it—silent a little—like a large snubbed child. "What are you going to do with me?"

It was the very question Strether himself had put to Miss Gostrey, and he wondered if he had sounded like that. But *he* at least could be more definite. "I'm going to take you right down to London."

"Oh, I've *been* down to London!" Waymarsh more softly moaned. "I've no use, Strether, for anything down there."

"Well," said Strether, good-humoredly, "I guess you've some use for *me*."

"So I've got to go?"

"Oh, you've got to go further yet."

"Well," Waymarsh sighed, "do your damndest! Only you *will* tell me before you lead me on all the way—?"

Our friend had again so lost himself, both for amusement and for contrition, in the wonder of whether he had made, in his own challenge that afternoon, such another figure, that he for an instant missed the thread. "Tell you—?"

"Why, what you've got on hand."

Strether hesitated. "Why, it's such a matter as that, even if I positively wanted, I shouldn't be able to keep it from you."

Waymarsh gloomily gazed. "What does that mean, then, but that your trip is just *for her*?"

"For Mrs. Newsome? Oh, it certainly is, as I say. Very much."

"Then why do you also say it's for me?"

Strether, in impatience, violently played with his latch. "It's simple enough. It's for both of you."

Waymarsh at last turned over with a groan. "Well, *I* won't marry you!"

"Neither, when it comes to that—!" But Strether had already laughed and escaped.

III.

He had told Miss Gostrey that he should probably take, for departure with Waymarsh, some afternoon train, and it thereupon in the morning appeared that this lady had made her own plan for an earlier one. She had breakfasted when Strether came into the coffee-room; but, Waymarsh not having yet emerged, he was in time to recall her to the terms of their understanding and to pronounce her discretion overdone. She was not, surely, to break away at the very moment she had created a want. He had met her as she rose from her little table in a window, where, with the morning papers beside her, she reminded him, as he let her know, of Major Pendennis breakfasting at his club—a compliment of which she professed a deep appreciation; and he detained her as pleadingly as if he had already—and notably under pressure of the visions of the night—learned to be unable to do without her. She must teach him at all events, before she went, to order breakfast as breakfast was ordered in Europe, and she must especially sustain him in the problem of ordering for Waymarsh. The latter had laid upon his friend, by desperate sounds through the door of his room, dreadful divined responsibilities in respect to beefsteak and oranges—responsibilities which Miss Gostrey took over with an alertness of action that matched her quick intelligence. She had weaned the expatriated before from traditions compared with which the matutinal beefsteak was but the creature of an hour, and it was not for her, with some of her memories, to falter in the path; though she freely enough declared, on reflection, that

there was always, in such cases, a choice of opposed policies. "There are times when to give them their head, you know—!"

They had gone to wait together in the garden for the dressing of the meal, and Strether found her more suggestive than ever. "Well, what?"

"Is to bring about for them such a complexity of relations—unless indeed we call it a simplicity!—that the situation *has* to wind itself up. They want to go back."

"And you want them to go!" Strether gayly concluded.

"I always want them to go, and I send them as fast as I can."

"Oh, I know—you take them to Liverpool."

"Any port will serve in a storm. I'm—with all my other functions—an agent for repatriation. I want to re-people our stricken country. What will become of it else? I want to discourage others."

The ordered English garden, in the freshness of the day, was delightful to Strether, who liked the sound, under his feet, of the tight, fine gravel, packed with the chronic damp, and who had the idlest eye for the deep smoothness of turf and the clean curves of paths. "Other people?"

"Other countries. Other people—yes. I want to encourage our own."

Strether wondered. "Not to come? Why then do you 'meet' them?—since it doesn't appear to be to stop them?"

"Oh, that they shouldn't come is, as yet, too much to ask. What I attend to is that they come quickly and return still more so. I meet them to help it to be over as soon as possible, and though I don't stop them I've my way of putting them through. That's my little system; and, if you want to know," said Maria Gostrey, "it's my real secret, my innermost mission and use. I only seem, you see, to beguile and approve; but I've thought it all out and I'm working all the while underground. I can't perhaps quite give you my formula, but I think that, practically, I succeed. I send you back spent. So you stay back. Passed through my hands—"

"We don't turn up again?" The further she went, always, the further he seemed to see himself able to follow. "I don't want your formula—I feel quite enough, as I hinted yesterday, your abysses. Spent!" he echoed. "Thank you—if that's how you're arranging so subtly to send me—for the warning."

For a minute, in the pleasant place—poetry in tariffed items, but all the more, for guests already convicted, a challenge to consumption—they smiled at each other in confirmed fellowship. "Do you call it subtly? It's a plain, poor tale. Besides, you're a special case."

"Oh, special cases—that's weak!" She was weak enough, further still, to defer her journey and agree to accompany the gentlemen on their own, might a separate carriage mark her independence; though it was, in spite of this, to befall, after luncheon, that she

went off alone, and that, with a tryst taken for a day of her company in London, they lingered another night. She had, during the morning—spent in a way that he was to remember, later on, as the very climax of his foretaste, as warm with presentiments, with what he would have called collapses—had all sorts of things out with Strether; and among them the fact that though there was never a moment of her life when she wasn't "due" somewhere, there was yet scarce a perfidy to others of which she was not capable for his sake. She explained, moreover, that wherever she happened to be she found a dropped thread to pick up, a ragged edge to repair, some familiar appetite in ambush, jumping out as she approached, yet appeasable with a temporary biscuit. It became, on her taking the risk of the deviation imposed on him by her insidious arrangement of his morning meal, a point of honor for her not to fail with Waymarsh of the larger success too; and her boast, later, to Strether, was that she had made their friend fare—and quite without his knowing what was the matter—as Major Pendennis would have fared at the Megatherium. She had made him breakfast like a gentleman, and it was nothing, she forcibly asserted, to what she would yet make him do. She made him participate in the slow reiterated ramble with which, for Strether, the new day amply filled itself; and it was by her art that he somehow had the air, on the ramparts and in the Rows, of carrying a point of his own.

The three strolled and stared and gossipped, or at least the two did; the case really yielding, for their comrade, if analyzed, but the element of stricken silence. This element, indeed, affected Strether as charged with audible rumblings, but he was conscious of the care of taking it, explicitly, as a sign of pleasant peace. He wouldn't appeal too much, for that provoked stiffness; yet he wouldn't be too freely tacit, for that suggested giving up. Waymarsh himself adhered to an ambiguous dumbness that might have represented either the growth of a perception or the despair of one; and at times and in places—where the low-browed galleries were darkest, the opposite gables queerest, the solicitations, of every kind, densest—the others caught him fixing hard some object of minor interest, fixing even at moments nothing discernible, as if he were indulging it with a truce. When he met Strether's eye on such occasions he looked guilty and furtive, fell the next minute into some attitude of retractation. Our friend couldn't show him the right things for fear of provoking some total renouncement, and was tempted even to show him the wrong in order to make him differ with triumph. There were moments when he himself felt shy of professing the full sweetness of the taste of leisure, and there were others when he found himself feeling as if his passages of interchange with the lady at his side might fall upon the third member of their party very much as Mr. Burchell, at Dr. Primrose's fireside, was influenced by the high flights of the visitors from London. The smallest things so arrested and amused him that he repeatedly almost

apologized—brought up afresh, in explanation, his plea of a previous grind. He was aware at the same time that his grind had been as nothing to Waymarsh's, and he repeatedly confessed that, to cover his frivolity, he was doing his best for his previous virtue.

Do what he might, however, his previous virtue was still there, and it seemed fairly to stare at him out of the windows of shops that were not as the shops of Woollett, fairly to make him want things that he shouldn't know what to do with. It was, by the oddest, the least admissible, of laws, demoralizing him now; and the way it boldly took was to make him want more wants. These first walks in Europe were in fact a kind of finely-lurid intimation of what one might find at the end of that process. Had he come back, after long years, in something already so like the evening of life, only to be exposed to it? It was at any rate over the shop-windows that he made, with Waymarsh, most free; though it would have been easier had not the latter most sensibly yielded to the appeal of the merely useful trades. He pierced with his sombre detachment the plate-glass of ironmongers and saddlers, while Strether flaunted an affinity with the dealers in stamped letter-paper and in neckties. Strether was in fact recurrently shameless in the presence of the tailors, though it was just over the heads of the tailors that his countryman most loftily looked. This gave Miss Gostrey a grasped opportunity to back up Waymarsh at his expense. The weary lawyer—it was unmistakable—had a conception of dress; but that, in view of some of the features of the effect produced, was just what made the danger of insistence on it. Strether wondered if he by this time thought Miss Gostrey less fashionable or Lambert Strether more so; and it appeared probable that most of the remarks exchanged between this latter pair about passers, figures, faces, personal types exemplified in their degree the disposition to talk as "society" talked.

Was what was happening to himself then, was what already *had* happened, really that a woman of fashion was floating him into society, and that an old friend, deserted on the brink, was watching the force of the current? When the woman of fashion permitted Strether—as she permitted him at the most—the purchase of a pair of gloves, the terms she made about it, the prohibition of neckties and other items till she should be able to guide him through the Burlington Arcade, were such as to fall upon a sensitive ear as a challenge to just imputations. Miss Gostrey was such a woman of fashion as could make without a symptom of vulgar blinking an appointment for the Burlington Arcade. Mere discriminations about a pair of gloves could thus at all events represent—always for such sensitive ears as were in question—possibilities of something that Strether could make a mark against only as the peril of apparent wantonness. He had quite the consciousness of his new friend, for their companion, that he might have had of a Jesuit in petticoats, a representative of the recruiting interests of

the Catholic church. The Catholic church, for Waymarsh—that was to say the enemy, the monster of bulging eyes and far-reaching, quivering, groping tentacles—was exactly society, exactly the multiplication of shibboleths, exactly the discrimination of types and tones, exactly the wicked old Rows of Chester, rank with feudalism; exactly, in short, Europe.

There was light for observation, however, in an incident that occurred just before they turned back to luncheon. Waymarsh had been for a quarter of an hour exceptionally mute and distant, and something or other—Strether was never to make out exactly what—proved, as it were, too much for him after his comrades had stood for three minutes taking in, while they leaned on an old balustrade that guarded the edge of the Row, a particularly crooked and huddled street-view. “He thinks us sophisticated, he thinks us worldly, he thinks us wicked, he thinks us all sorts of queer things,” Strether reflected; for it was wondrous, the vague quantities that our friend had, within a couple of short days, acquired the habit of conveniently and conclusively lumping together. There seemed moreover a direct connection between some such inference and a sudden grim dash taken by Waymarsh to the opposite side. This movement was startlingly sudden, and his companions at first supposed him to have espied, to be pursuing, the glimpse of an acquaintance. They next made out, however, that an open door had instantly received him, and they then recognized him as engulfed in the establishment of a jeweller, behind whose glittering front he was lost to view. The act had somehow the note of a demonstration, and it left each of the others to show a face almost of fear. But Miss Gostrey broke into a laugh. “What’s the matter with him?”

“Well,” said Strether, “he can’t stand it.”

“But can’t stand what?”

“Anything. Europe.”

“Then how will that jeweller help him?”

Strether seemed to make it out, from their standpoint, between the interstices of arrayed watches, of close-hung dangling gewgaws. “You’ll see.”

“Ah, that’s just what—if he buys anything—I’m afraid of: that I shall see something rather dreadful.”

Strether studied the finer appearances. “He may buy everything.”

“Then don’t you think we ought to follow him?”

“Not for worlds. Besides, we can’t. We’re paralyzed. We exchange a long, scared look; we publicly tremble. The thing is, you see, we ‘realize.’ He has struck for freedom.”

She wondered, but she laughed. “Ah, what a price to pay! And I was preparing some for him so cheap.”

“No, no,” Strether went on, frankly amused now; “don’t call it that: the kind of freedom *you* deal in is dear.” Then as to justify himself: “Am I not, in *my* way, trying it? It’s this.”

"Being here, you mean, with me?"

"Yes, and talking to you as I do. I've known you a few hours, and I've known *him* all my life; so that if the ease I thus take with you about him isn't magnificent"—and the thought of it held him a moment—"why, it's rather base."

"It's magnificent!" said Miss Gostrey, to make an end of it. "And you should hear," she added, "the ease *I* take—and I above all intend to take—with Mr. Waymarsh."

Strether thought. "About *me*? Ah, that's no equivalent. The equivalent would be Waymarsh's serving me up—his remorseless analysis of me. And he'll never do that"—he was sadly clear. "He'll never remorselessly analyze me." He quite held her with the authority of this. "He'll never say a word to you about me."

She took it in; she did it justice; yet after an instant her reason, her restless irony, disposed of it. "Of course he won't. For what do you take people, that they're able to say words about anything, able remorselessly to analyze? There are not many like you and me. It will be only because he's too stupid."

It stirred in her friend a sceptical echo which was at the same time the protest of the faith of years. "Waymarsh stupid?"

"Compared with you."

Strether had still his eyes on the jeweller's front, and he waited a moment to answer. "He's a success of a kind that I haven't approached."

"Do you mean he has made money?"

"He makes it—to my belief. And I," said Strether, "though with a back quite as bent, have never made anything. I'm a perfectly-equipped failure."

He was afraid, an instant, that she would ask him if he meant he was poor; and he was glad she didn't, for he really didn't know to what the truth on this unpleasant point mightn't have prompted her. She only, however, confirmed his assertion. "Thank goodness you're a failure—it's why I so distinguish you! Anything else to-day is too hideous. Look about you—look at the successes. Would you *be* one, on your honor? Look, moreover," she continued, "at me."

For a little, accordingly, their eyes met. "I see," Strether returned. "You too are out of it."

"The superiority you discern in me," she concurred, "announces my futility. If you knew," she sighed, "the dreams of my youth! But our realities are what has brought us together. We're beaten brothers in arms."

He smiled at her kindly enough, but he shook his head. "It doesn't alter the fact that you're expensive. You've cost me already—!"

But he had hung fire. "Cost you what?"

"Well, my past—in one great lump. But no matter," he laughed: "I'll pay with my last penny."

Her attention, however, had now been engaged by their comrade's return, for Waymarsh met their view as he came out of his shop. "I hope he hasn't paid," she said, "with *his* last; though I'm convinced he has been splendid, and has been so for you."

"Ah no—not that!"

"Then for me?"

"Quite as little." Waymarsh was by this time near enough to show signs his friend could read, though he seemed to look almost carefully at nothing in particular.

"Then for himself?"

"For nobody. For nothing. For freedom."

"But what has freedom to do with it?"

Strether's answer was indirect. "To be as good as you and me. But different."

She had had time to take in their companion's face; and with it, as such things were easy for her, she took in all. "Different—yes. But better!"

If Waymarsh was sombre he was also indeed almost sublime. He told them nothing, left his absence unexplained, and though they were convinced he had made some extraordinary purchase they were never to learn its nature. He only glowered grandly at the tops of the old gables. "It's the sacred rage," Strether had had further time to say; and this sacred rage was to become, between them, for convenient comprehension, the description of one of his periodical necessities. It was Strether who eventually contended that it did make him better than they. But by that time Miss Gostrey was convinced that she didn't want to be better than Strether.

(To be continued.)